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REMARKS

Claims 11-15, 19-22, 29, 30, and 33-43 are now pending in this application for which applicants seek reconsideration.

Amendment

Independent claims 11 and 33 have been amended more clearly define the invention. Claims 12, 26, 34, and 36-39 have been amended to improve their form and to make any corresponding changes made to the independent claims. These claims also have been amended to remove minor informalities contained therein. Each of the independent claims now include second and third detecting means/detectors, and a sheet length determining means/device. New claims 40-43 have been added to further define the present invention. These new claims substantially parallel independent claims 11 and 33, but with varying scope. For instance, new claim 40 is substantially similar to claim 11, except that the term "first" in association with "moving means" has been deleted as being superfluous. Similarly, new claim 41 parallels claim 11, also with the term "first" in association with "moving device" deleted. Further, claim 41 calls for the second and third detectors that detect the trailing edge of the sheet as opposed to the leading end. Similarly, claims 42 and 43 call for a second detector/detecting means that detects the trailing end of the sheet, and omits the third detector/detecting means. Support for these claims is found at least on pages 47-48. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claims 11-22, 26, 29, 30, and 33-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Takaishi (USP 6,065,383). Applicants submit that this rejection has been rendered moot by the present amendment as Takaishi does not disclose the control means that controls the moving means/device to move and stop the sheet processing means/processor based on the conveying amount and the length of the sheet in the conveying direction after the detection of the leading or trailing edge of the sheet.

As presently recited in claims 11 and 33, the detecting means/detector (e.g., 93), which

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detects the side edge of the sheet being conveyed, and the sheet processing means/processor (e.g., 90) are moved in a width direction, which is perpendicular to the conveying direction. Moreover, these components (90, 93) are stopped when the detecting components (93, 31) detect the side edge of the sheet and the leading edge (or trailing edge in new claims) of the sheet to control the movement of the sheet processing means/processor based on the conveying amount and the length of the sheet in the conveying direction after the detection of the leading or trailing edge. Takaishi does not disclose or teach these aspects of the claimed invention.

Because the invention set forth in claims 11 and 33 relies upon the conveying amount and the sheet length instead of the sheet size, it is possible to accurately track sheets with respect to the width of the sheet regardless of the speed of the sheet feed, i.e., whatever the speed of the sheet feed of the upstream device connected to the sheet processing apparatus. Takaishi discloses a punching unit 40 that moves perpendicularly to the conveying direction when a predetermined period, **which is set according to the sheet size**, has lapsed after detecting the leading edge of the sheet. As Takaishi merely moves the puncher after the lapse of the predetermined period, which is set by the sheet size, the predetermined period will not be suitable when the sheet conveying speed varies, such as when a plurality of image forming devices having different conveying speeds are connected upstream of the sheet processing apparatus in Takaishi.

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Conclusion

Applicants submit that the pending claims patentably distinguish over Takaishi as Takaishi fails to disclose or teach controlling the movement of the sheet processing means/processor as set forth in the independent claims. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Date: 02/19/04

Respectfully submitted,

  
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